

Notable Discouery of Coosenage.
Now daily practised by sundry lewd persons, called Connie-catchers, and Crosse-byters.

Plainely laying open those pernicious sleights that hath brought many ignorant men to confusion.

Written for the general benefit of all Gentlemen, Citizens, Apprentises, Countrey Farmers and yeomen, that may hap to fall into the company of such coosening companions.

With a delightfull discourse of the coosnage of Colliers.

Nascimur pro patria.

By R. Greene, Maister of Arts.



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G. STEEVENS



To all my good friends

health.



AS Plato (my good friendes) travelled from Athens to Aegypt, and from thence through sundry clymes to increase his knowledge: so I as desirous as hee to search the deapth of those liberall Artes wherein I was a professour, lefte my studie in *Wbarrington Colledge*, & trauced the country to grow famous in my facultie, so that I was so expert in the *Art of Cony-catching* by my continuall practise, that that learned Philosopher *Iacke Cuttes*, whose deepe insight into this science had drawn him thrise through euery gaole in England, meeting of mee at *Maidstone*, gaue mee the bucklers, as the subtlest that euer he sawe in that quaint and myssicall forme of Foolosophie: for if euer I brought my Conny but to crush a pottle of ale with mee, I was as sure of all the crownes in his purse, as if hee had conueyed them into my proper possession by a deede of gifte with his owne hande.

At *Dequoy*, *Mumchance*, *Catch-dolt*, *Oure le bourse*, *Non est possible*, *Dutch Noddie*, or *Irish one and thirtie*, none durst euer make compare with me for excellence: but as so many heades so many wits, so some that would

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Newgate
builded by
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The names
of suche
game as
Conniat-
chers vse.

To the Readers

At the mo-
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purse.

not stoope a farthing at cardes, would venter all the
byte in their boung at dice. Therefore had I cheates for
the very sife, of the squariers, langrets, gourds, stoppe-
dice, high-men, low-men, and dice barde for all ad-
uantages; that if I fetcht in anie nouyce cyther at ta-
bles, or anie other game of hazard, I would bee sure
to strippe him of all that his purse had in Esse, or his
credyt in Posse, ere the simple Connie and I parted.

When neyther of these would serue, I had consorts
that could verse, nippe, and foyst, so that I had a super-
ficiall sight into euery profitable facultie. Infomuch
that my principles grew authenticall, and I so famous,
that had I not beene crost by those two peeuish Pam-
phlets, I might at the nexte Midsommer haue worne
Doctor Stories cappe for a fauor. For I trauelled almost
throughout all England, admired for my ingenious ca-
pacitie: till coming about Exceter, I began to exer-
cise my art, and drawing in a Tanner for a tame Conie,
assoone as he had lost two shillings he made this replic.
Sirha, although you haue a liuery on your backe, and a
cognisance to countenance you withall, and beare the
port of a Gentleman, yet I see you are a false knaue and
a Conny-catcher, and this your companion your setter,
and that before you and I part Ile proue.

At these wordes Conny-catcher and Serter, I was
driven into as great a maze, as if one had dropt out of
the clouds, to heare a pefant cant the wordes of art be-
lōging to our trade: yet I set a good face on the matter
and asked him what he ment by Cony-catching. Marry
(q.he) althogh it is your practise, yet I haue for 3. pence
bought a litle Pamphlet, that hath taught me to smoke
such a couple of knaues as you be. When I heard him
talke of smoaking, my heart waxed cold, and I began to
gather into him gently. No no sir (q.he) you cānot verse
vpon me, this booke hath taught me to beware of cros-
biting:

To the Readers

biting: And so to be breefe he vsed me curteously, and that night caused the Constable to lodge mee in prison, & the nexte morning I was carried before the Iustice, where likewise he had this cursed booke of Cony-catching, so that hee could tel the secretes of mine art better then my selfe: whereupon after strict examination I was sent to the gaole, & at the Sessions by good hap & some friend that my money procured mee, I was deliuered. As soone as I was at liberty, I got one of these bookes, & began to tolle it ouer very devoutly, wherein I found one art so perfectly anotomized, as if he had bene practitioner in our facultie forty winters before: then with a deepe sigh I began to curse this R. G. that had made a publike spoyle of so noble a science, and to exclaime against that palpable asse who soeuer, that would make any pen-man priuy to our secret sciences. But see the sequel, I smothered my sorrowe in silence, and away I trudged out of Devonshire, & went towards Cornwall, & comming to a simple Ale-house to lodge, I found at a square table hard by the fire halfe a doozen countrie Farmers at cardes. The sight of these penny-fathers at play, draue me straight into a pleasant passion, to blesse fortune that had offred such sweet opportunity to exercise my wits, & fill my purse with crowns: for I counted all the mony they had, mine by proper interest. As thus I stood looking on them playing at crof-ruffe, one was taken reuoking, whereat the other said, what neighbour wil you play the cony-catcher with vs? no no, wee haue read the booke as well as you. Neuer went a cup of small beere so sorowfully down an Ale-knights belly in a frosty morning, as that word strooke to my hart, so that for feare of trouble I was faine to try my good hap at square play, at which fortune fauoring mee, I wan twenty shillings, and yet doe as simply as I could, I was not onelie suspected, but called Conny-catcher and crosse-biter.

But

To the Readers

But away I went with the money, and came presently to London, where I no sooner arrived amongst the true, but I heard of a second parte worse then the first, which raue mee into such a great choller, that I began to enquire what this R. G. should bee. At last I learned that hee was a scholler, and a Maister of Artes, and a Conny-catcher in his kinde, though not at cards, and one that fauoured good fellowes, so they were not palpable offenders in such desperate lawes: whereupon reading his booke, and surueying euery line with deepe iudgement, I began to note folly in the man, that would straine a Gnat, and lette passe an Elephant: that would touch small scapes, and lette grosse fautes passe without any reprehension. Insomuch that I resolved to make an Apologie, and to aunswere his libellous inuectiues, and to proue that we Conny-catchers are like little flies in the grasse, which liue: or little leaues and doe no more harme: whereas there bee in Englande other professions that bee great Conny-catchers and caterpillers, that make barraine the field wherein they baite.

Therefore all my good friends vouch of my paines, and pray for my proceedings, for I meane to haue about with this R. G. and to giue him such a veny, that he shal be affrayd hereafter to disparage that mystricall science of Conny-catching: if not, and that I proue too weake for him in sophistrie, I meane to borrowe *Wili Bickertons* Blade, of as good a temper as *Morglay King Arthurs* sword was, and so challenge him to the single combat: But desirous to ende the quarrell with the penne if it be possible, heare what I haue learned in *Whittington Colledge*.

Tours in cardes and dice

Cuthbert cony-catcher.

The

THE ARTE OF CONNY- CATCHING.



Here be requisite effectually to ad the art of Conny-catching. thre severall parties, the Better, the Werter, and the barnacle. The nature of the Better, is to draw anie person familiarly to drinke with him, which person they call the conie, and their method is according to the man they aime at: if a gentleman, marchant, or apprentice, the cony is the more easily caught, in that they are soone induced to plaie, and therefore I omit the circumstance which they vse in catching of them. And because the poore countrie farmer or yeoman is the mark which they most of all shoote at, who they know comes not empty to the Werter, I will discover the meanes they put in practise to bring in some honest, simple, and ignorant me to their purpose. The conie-catchers apparelled like honest ciuel Gentlemen, or good fellowes, with a smooth face, as if butter would not melt in their mouths, after dinner when the clients are come from Westminster hall, and are at leasure to walke by and downe Pauls, Fleetstreet, Holborne, the Strand, and such common haunted places, where these cooing companions attend onely to spie out a pray, who as they see a plaine countrie fellow wel and cleanly apparelled, either in a coat of home spun russet, or of freeze as the time requires, and a side pouch at his side, there is a conie, saith one. At that word out flies the Better, & overtaking the man begins to salute him thus: Sir, God saue you, you are welcme to London, how doth all our friends in the countrie, I hope they be all in health? The countrie man seeing a man so courteous he knows not, halfe in a brown studie at this strange salutation, perhaps makes him this answer: sye, al our friends in the countrie are wel, thanks be to God, but truly I knowe you not, you must pardon me. Why sir, saith the setter, getting by his tongue what countrie man he is, are ye not such a countryman? if he saie yes then he creeps vpon him closely, if he say no, then straight the setter comes ouer him thus. In good sooth sye, I know you by your face, and haue bin in your companie before

before, I praie you (if without offence) let me craue your name and the place of your abode. The simple man straight tels him where he dwels, his name, and who be his next neighbors, and what countrie Gentlemen dwell about him. After he hath learned all of him, then he comes over his fallows kindly, sir, though I haue bin somewhat bold to be inquisitiue of your name, yet hold me excused, for I tooke you for a friend of mine, but since by mistaking I haue made you slacke your busines, wele drinke a quart of wine or a pot of ale together, if the foole bee so readie as to go, then the conie is caught, but if hee smackes the setter, and smells a rat by his clawing, and will not drinke with him, then awaie goes the setter, and discourseth to the verser y name of the man, the parish he dwels in, and what Gentlemen are his neere neighbors, with that awaie goes he. and crossing the man at some turning, meets him full in the face, & greets him thus. What Goodman Barton, how fare all our friends about you? you are wel met, I haue the wine for you, you are welcome to towne. The poore Countrie man hearing himselfe named by a man he knows not, marvels, and answers that he knows him not, and craues pardon. Not mee Goodman Barton, haue you forgot me? why I am such a mans kinsman, your neighbor not farre off, how doth this or that good Gentleman my friend? good Lord that I should be out of your remembrance, I haue bin at your house diuerse times. Indeed sayth the Farmer, are you such a mans kinsman, surely say if you had not challenged acquaintance of me, I shoulde neuer haue knowen you, I haue cleane forgotten you, but I know the good gentleman your cousin well, he is my verie good neighbor. And for his sake sayth the verser, wele drinke ere we parte, happily the man thanks him, & to the wine or ale they go, then ere they part they make him a conie, and so feret claw him at cards, that they leaue him as bare of monie as an ape of a taile. Thus haue the filthie fellows their subtil fetches, to drawe on poore men to fall into their cooing practises. Thus like consuming moths of y commonwealth, they praie vpon the ignorance of such plain soules as measure all their owne honestie, not regarding either conscience, or the satall reuenge thats threathned for such idle and
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The Art of Conny-catching.

licentious persons, do but imploy al their wits to ouerthow
such as with their handy thurst satisfie their hartie thirst: they
preferring cosenage before laboꝝ, and chusing an idle practise
before an honest forme of good lining. Wel, to the method a-
gaine of taking vp their conies. If the poore countreiman smoke
them still, and wil not stoop vnto either of their lures: then
one, either the verser, oꝝ the setter, oꝝ some of their crew, foꝝ
there is a fraternitie betwixt them, steps before the cony as he
goeth, & lets drop twelue pence in the high way, that of foꝝce
the cony must see it. The countreiman spying the shilling,
maketh not daintie, foꝝ *quis nisi mentis inops oblatum respuit au-
rum*, but stoopeth very mannerly and taketh it vp: then one of
the conny catchers behind crieth halfe part, and so chalengeh
halfe of his finding, the countreiman content offreth to change
the mony, nay saith friend saith the verser, tis il luck to keepe
found mony, wele go spend it in a pottle of wine, oꝝ a breake-
fast, dinner oꝝ supper, as the time of day requires: if the cony
say he wil not, then answeres the verser, spend my part: if still
the cony refuse, he taketh halfe and away. If they spy the coun-
treiman to be of a hauing and couetous mind, then haue they
a further policie to draw him on: another that knoweth the
place of his abode, meeteth him and saith, sir, wel met. I haue
run hastily to ouertake you, I pray you dwell you not in Dar-
bshire, in such a villiage? yea marry do I friend saith the cony,
then replies the verser, truly sir I haue a sute to you, I am
going out of towne, and must send a letter to the parson of
your parish, you shal not refuse to doe a stranger such fauor,
as to carry it him, haply, as men may in time meet, it may lye
in my lot to do you as good a turn, and foꝝ your paines I will
geue you xii. d. The poore cony in meer simplicity saith, sir, I le-
do so much foꝝ you with al my hart, where is your letter? I
haue it not good sir redy written, but if I may intreat you to
step into some tauerne oꝝ alehouse, wele drink the while, and
I wil write but a line oꝝ two: at this the cony stoopes, and
foꝝ greedines of the mony, and vpon courtesie goes with the
setter vnto the tauerne. As they walke they meet the verser,
and then they all three go into the tauerne together.

See Gentlemen what great Logicians these conny cat-

The Art of Connycatching.

thers be, that haue such rhetoricall persuasions to induce the poore countriman to his confusion, and what variety of villanie they haue to strip the poore farmer of his money. Well, imagine the cony is in the tauerne, then sits down the verser, saying to the setter, what firrba, wilt thou geue me a quart of wine, or shal I geue thee one? wele drinke a pint saith the setter, and play a game at cards for it, respecting more the sport, then the losse, content quod the verser, go cal for a paire, & while he is gone to fetch them, he saith to the cony, you shal see mee fetch ouer my yong master for a quart of wine finely, but this you must do for me when I cut the cards, as I will not cut a bone fine of, mark then of al the greatest pack which is vndermost, and when I bid you cal a card for me, name that, & you shal see wele make him pay for a quart of wine straight: true, lie saies the cony, I am no great plaier at cards, neither doe wel vnderstand your meaning: why quod he it is thus. He play at mumblechance, or decoy, he shal shuffle the cards and ile cut, now epther of vs must cal a card, you shal cal for me, & he for himselfe, and whose card comes first winnes, therefore when I haue cut the cards, then mark the nethermost of the greatest heape that I set vpon the cards which I cut off, and euer call that for me. Now saith the cony I vnderstand you, let me alone, I warrant you ile sit your turn, with that in comes the Setter with his cards, asking at what game they shal playe, why saith the verser at a new game called mumblechance, that hath no policie nor knauerie, but plaine as a pikestaffe, you shal shuffle and ile cut, you shal cal a card, and this honest man a stranger almost to vs both, shal cal another for me, & which of our cards comes first shal win: content saith the setter, that is but meer hazard, so he shuffles the cards, and the verser cuts off some four cards, and then taking vp the heape to set vpon them, geueth the cony a glance of the bottom card of that heap and saith, now sir, cal for me. The cony to blinde the setters eyes, asketh as though he were not made priuie to the game, what, shal I cut? what card? saith the verser? why what you wil, eithers hart, spade, club or diamond, cotecard or other. Is it so saith the cony, why then you shal haue the four of harts which was the card he had a glance of: and saith the setter

(hole)

The Art of Connycatching.

(holding the cards in his hand and turning vp the vppermost, as if he knew not wel the game) ile haue the knaue of trumps, nay saith the verser there is no trump, you may cal what carde you wil: then saith he ile haue the ten of spades, with that he drawes. and the four of harts comes first: wel saith the setter, tis but hazard, mine might haue come as wel as yours, thus is vp, I seare not the set: so they shuffle and cut, but the verser winnes. Well saith the setter, no butter wil cleaue on my bread: what not one draught among five, Draw a fresh pint, ile haue another bout with you: but sir I beleue, saith he to the cony, you see some card, that it goes so crosse with me. I saith the cony, I hope you think not so of me, tis but hazard and chaunce, for I am a meere stranger to the game, as I am an honest man I neuer saw it before.

Thus this simple cony closeth vp smoothly to take the versers part, only for greedines to haue him win the wine: wel qd. the setter, then ile haue one cast more, and to it they goe, but hee loseth al, and begins to chafe in this manner: were it not quoth he, that I care not for a quart of wine, I could sweare as many othes for anger, as there be haire on my head, why should not my luck be as good as yours, and fortune fauor mee as well as you: what not one cald card in ten cuts, ile forswear the game for ever. Chafe not man qd. the verser, sith we haue your quart of wine ile shew you the game, and therewith discourseth all to him, as if he were ignorant of it. The setter, as simply as if the knaue were ignorant saith, ye marry I thought so, you must needs win whē he knowes what card to call. I might play long inough before I got a set. Truly qd. the cony tis a pretty game, for its not possible for him to lose that cuts the cardes, the other that shuffles may lose S. Peters rope if he had it. Well, ile carry this home with me into the countrie, and win many a potte of ale with it. A fresh pint saith the verser, and then wele away: but seeing sir you are going homewarde, ile learn you a trick worth the noting, that shal win you many a pot in the winters nights: with that he culs out the four knaues, and pickes one in the top, one in the midst, and one in the bottom. Now sir saith he, you see these three knaues apparantlie, thrust them downe with your hand, and cut where you wil, and though they be so farre asunder, ile make them all come together. Lets see that I pray you saith the cony, me thinks tis impossible. So the verser

The Art of Connycatching.

drawes, and al the three knaves come in one heap: this he dooth once or twice, then the cony wonders at it, and offers a pinte of wine to be taught it. Ray saith the verser ile do it for thanks, and therfore mark where you haue taken out the four knaves, lay two together aboue, and draw vp one of them that it may be seen, then pick the other in the midst, and the third in y^e bottom, so wheⁿ any cuts, cut he neuer so warily, 3. knaves must of force come together, for the bottem knave is cut to lie vpon both the vpper knauer. I marrie saith the setter, but the three knaves you shewd come not together. True said the verser, but one among a thousand mark not that, it requires a quicke eye, a sharp wit, and a reaching head to spie at the first. Gramercie for this trick saith the cony, ile dominere with this among my neighbors. Thus do the verser and the setter seem frendly to the Cony, offering him no shew of cosenage, nor once to drawe him in for a pinte of wine, the more to shadow their villanie, but now begins the sport: as thus they sit tipling comes the Barnacle & thrustes open the doze, looking into the room where they are, and as one bashful steps back againe saying, I cry you mercie gentlemen, I thought a frend of mine had been here, pardon my boldnes: no harm saith the verser, I pray you drink a cup of wine with vs and welcome: in comes the barnacle, and taking the cup, drinks to the cony, and then saith, what at cards gentlemen: wer it not I should be offensive to the companie, I would play for a pinte til my frend come I look for. Why sir saith the verser, if you wil sit down you shalbe taken vp for a quarte of wine: with al my heart saith the barnacle, what wil you play at, Drumero, primo bisso, Sant, one and thirtie, new cut, or what shalbe the game? Sir saith the verser I am but an ignorant man at cards, & you haue them at your fingers end, ile play with you at a game that hath no deceit, called murchance at cards, and it is thus: you shal shuffle, and ile cut, you shal cal one card, and this honest yeoman shal cal another for me, and which of our cards comes first shal win, here you see is no deceit, and at this ile play. So truly saith the Conie, me thinkes there can be no great craft in this. Wel saith the barnacle for a pinte of wine haue at you: so they play as befoze, fure vp, and the verser winnes. This is hard luck saith the barnacle, and I beleue the honest man spies some card in the bottom, therefore I will make this, alwaies to pick the
bot-

The Art of Connycatching.

bottom card: content saith the verser: and the cony to cloake the matter saith, sir, you offer me iniurie to think that I can call a card, when I neither touch them, shuffle, cut, nor draw them. Ah sir saith the barnacle, geue losers leave to speake: wel, to it they go again, & then the barnacle knowing the game best, by chopping a card winnes two of the five, but lets the verser win the set: then in a chafe he sweareth tis but his ill luck, and he can see no deceit in it, therfore he wil play xii. d. a cut. The verser is content, and wins ii. or iii. s. of the barnacle, whereat he chafes and saith, I came bether in an il houre, but ile win my monie again, or lose al in my purse, with that he drawes out a purs with some three or four pound and claps on the board: the verser asketh the conie secretlie by signes if he wil be his halfe, he saies yea, and straight seeks for his purse. The Barnacle shuffles the cardes thowlie, and the verser cuts as befoze, the barnacle, when hee hath drawn one card saith, ile either winne something or lose something, therfore ile vie and reue euerie card at my pleasure til either yours or mine come out, therfore xii. d. vpon this card, my card comes first. So saith the verser, and saith the Conie I durst laie xii. d. more. I hold it saith the barnacle: so they vie and reue til some ten shillings be on the stake: and then next comes forth the versers card that the conie called, and so the barnacle loseth. This fleshethe the conie, the sweetnes of gaine makes him frolike, and none more redy to vie and reue then he. Thus for three or four times the barnacle loseth. At last to whet on the conie he striketh his chopt card and winneth a good stake: away with the witch cries the barnacle, I hope the cards wil turne at last. Much thin as the conie, twas but a chance you askt so right one of the five that was cut off, there was fourtie to one on my side, and ile haue you on the lurch anon. So stil they vie & reue and soz once that the barnacle winnes, the conie gets five: at last when they mean to shauie the conie cleane of al his coine, the barnacle chafeth, and vpon a pawn borroweth monie of the tapper, and sweares he will vie it to the vttermost. When thus he chops his card to cros-bite the conie: he first looks on the bottom card, and shuffles often, but stil keeping that bottom card, which he knowes to be vppermost, then sets he downe the cards, and the verser to encourage the conie, cuts off but three cards, whereof the barnacles card must needes be the vppermost. When hee

The Art of Connycatching.

Shewes the bottom card of the other heap cut off to the conntie, & sets it vpon the barnacles card which he knowes, so that of force the card that was laid vpermost must come forth first, and then the barnacle calls that card. They draw a card, and then the barnacle vies, and the counterman vies vpon him: for this is the law, as oft as one vies or reuies, the other must see it, els hee loseth the stake. Till at last the barnacle plies it so, that perhaps he vies more monie then the conntie hath in his purse. Upon this the conntie knowing his card is the third or fourth card, and that he hath fortie to one against the barnacle, pawns his rings if he haue anie, his sword, his cloake, or els what hee hath about him, to maintein the vie: and when he laughs in his sleeve, thinking he hath best the barnacle of all, then the barnacles card comes forth, and strikes such a cold humour to his heart, that he sits as a man in a trance, not knowing what to doe, & sighing while his heart is redie to breake, thinking on the monie that he hath lost. Perhaps the man is very simple and patient, and whatsoeuer he thinks, for feare goes his way quiet with his losse while the Connycatchers laugh and deuide the spoile, and being out of doores, poore man, goes to his lodging with a heauie heart, pensive and sorrowful, but too late, for perhaps his state did depend on that monie, and so he, his wife and children, & his familie, are brought to extreame miserie. Another perhaps more hardie and subtle, smokes the connycatchers, and smelleth cosenage, and saith they shal not haue his monie so, but they answer him with braues, and though hee bring them before an officer, the knaues are so fauoured, that the man neuer recouereth his monie, and he is let slip unpunisht.

Thus are the poore conntes robbed by these base minded Caterpillers: thus are seruicemen oft entised to play, and lose all: thus are pzentises induced to be conntes, and so are cosened of their masters monie: yea yong gentlemen, marchants, & other, are fetcht in by these damnable rakehels, a plague as ill as hell, which is, present losse of monie, and insuing miserie. A lamentable case in England when such vipers are suffered to breed, and are not cut off with the sword of iustice. This eniimity is not onlie in London, but now generallie dispersed thzough all England, in euerie Shire, Citie, and Towne of any receipt, and many complaints are heard of their egregious cosenage.

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The Art of Connycatching.

The poore farmer simplie going about his busines, or vnto his attorneis chamber, is catcht vp and cosened of all: the seruing-man sent with his Lords treasure, loseth oftentimes most part to these woymes of the commonwealth: the prentise hauing his masters monie in charge, is spoiled by them, and from an honest seruant, either dꝛiuen to run away, or to liue in discredite for euer. The gentlemā loseth his land, the marchant his stock, and al to these abhominable conicatchers, whose meanes is as it as their liuing, for they are al either wedded to whores, or so addicted to whores, that what they get from honest mē, they spend in balodie houses among harlots, and consume it as vaine as they get it villanously. Their eares are of adamant, as pittiles as they are trecherous, for be the man neuer so poore, they will not returne him one pennie of his losse. I remember a mery iest done of late to a welchman, who being a mēer stranger in London, and not wel acquainted with the English tongue, chanced amongst certaine conicatchers, who spying the gentleman had monie, they so dealt with him, that what by signes and broken English, they got him in for a conie, and fleest him of euerie peny that he had, and of his sword: at last the man smoakt them, and drew his dagger vpon them at Ludgate, for therabout they had catcht him, and would haue stabb one of them for his mony, but people stopt him, the rather because they could not vnderstande him, though he had a card in one hand, and his dagger in the other, saying as wel as he could, a card, a card, mon dieu. In the mean while the conicatchers were got into pauls, and so away, The welchman folowed them seeking there vp and down in the church stail with his naked dagger and the card in his hand, the gentlemen maruele what he meant thereby: at last one of his countremen met him, and enquired the cause of his choler, then he told him how he was cosened at cards, and robb of al his monie, but as his losse was voluntarie, so his seeking for them was mere vanitie, for they were kept into some blind alehouse to deuide the shares. Nere to S. Edmundsburie in Suffolke, there dwelt an honest man a shoemaker, who hauing some xx. markes in his purse, long in gathering, and nerele kept, came to the market to buy hides, and by chance fell amongst Conicatchers, whose names I omit because I hope of their amendment. This paine Countreman drawn in by these former deuises, was
made

The Art of Connycatching.

made a cony, & stript of his xx. mark, to his undoing: the knaves
scapt, and he went home a sorrowful man. Soon after one of these
conycatchers was taken for a suspected person, and laid in Bur-
gale, the sessions coming, and he produced to the bar, it was the
poor shomakers fortune to be there, who seeing this rogue arrai-
ned, was glad, and said nothing to him, looking what would be
the issue of his appearance. At last he was brought before the
Justices to be examined of his life, and being demanded what
occupation he was, said none, what profession then are you of, &
how live you? Marrie quoth he I am a gentleman, and live of
my friends. Whats a lie qud. the shomaker, under correction of the
worshipful of the bench, you have a trade, and are by your art a
conycatcher. A Conycatcher said one of the Justices and smiled,
is he a warriner fellow, canst thou tel whose warren he keepeth?
No sir your worship mistaketh me, he is not a warriner, but a
conycatcher. The bench, that neuer heard this name before, smi-
led, attributing the name to the mans simplicitie, thought hee
meant a warriner: which the poore man seeing, answered, y some
conies this fellow caught were worth xx. mark a peece, for y^e w^ose
qud. he, I am one of them, and so discoursed the order of the art, and
the basenes of the cosenage: wherupon the Justices looking into
his life, iudged him to be whipt: the shomaker desired he might
geue him his paiment, which was granted. When he came to
his punishment the shomaker laught saying, tis a mad worlde
when poor Conies are able to beat their catchers: but hee lent
him so frendlie lashes, that almost he made him pay an ounce of
bloud for every pound of siluer. Thus we see how the generation
of these vipers increaseth, to the confusion of many honest men,
whose practises to my poor power I haue discovered and set out,
with the villainous sleights they vse to intrap y simple, yet haue
they clokes for the rain, and shadows for their villainies, calling
it by the name of art or law: as conycatching art, or conycatching
law. And hereof it riseth, that like as law, when y term is truly
considered, signifieth the ordinance of good men, established for
y commonwelth, to repress viciuous living, so these conycatchers
turn the cat in the pan, geuing to vile patching shifts, an honest
& goodlie title, calling it by the name of a law, because by a mul-
titude of hateful rules, as it were in good learning, they do ex-
ercise their villainies to the destruction of sundry honest persons.

Here,

5

The Art of Conny-catching.

Hereupon they geue their false conueyance the name of Conny-catching law, as there be also other lawes: as high law, lacking law, sigging law, cheting law, and barnardes law. If you maruel at these misteries and queint words, consider, as carpenters haue many tearmes familiar inough to their pzentises, that oth-
er vnderstand not at all, so haue the connycatchers not without great cause, for a falshood once detected, can neuer compasse the desired effect. Therefore wil I presently acquaint you with the signification of the tearmes in a table. But leauing them til time and place, conning downe Turnmill Street the other day, I met one whom I suspected a connycatcher, I drew him on to the tauern, and after a cup of wine or two, I talkt with him of the manner of his life, and tolde him I was sorry for his frendes sake, that he tooke so bad a course as to liue vpon the spoyle of poore men, and specially to deserue the name of conny-catching, dissuading him from that base kind of life, that was so ignominious in the world, and so lothsome in the sight of God. But sir, quoth he, calling me by my name, as my religion is small, so my deuotion is lesse, I leaue God to be disputed on by diuines, the two ends I aime at, are gain & ease, but by what honest gaines I may get, neuer comes within the compasse of my thoughtes. Though your experience in trauell be great, yet in home matters mine is more: yea I am sure you are not so ignorant, but you know that few men can liue vprightly, vnlesse they haue some pety way more then the world is witnes to to help themselves withal. Think you some lawyers coulde be such purchasers if al their pleas were honest, and their proceedings iustice and conscience: that offices would be so dearely bought, and the buyers so soon enriched, if they counted not pillage an honest kinde of purchase: or think you that men of handy trades make all their commodities without falshood, when so many of them are become daily purchasers: nay what wil you more: who so hath not some sinister way to helpe himselfe, but followeth his nose alwaies straight forward, may wel hold vp the head for a yea-
re or two, but the third he must needes smke, and gather the winde into beggars haue: therefore sir, cease to perswade me to the contrarie, for my resolution is to beat my wits, and busie my byaines to saue and help me, by what meanes so euer I care not

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The Art of Conny-catching.

So I may avoid the danger of the law. Whereupon seeing this conny-catcher resolved in his fortune of life, leaving him to his lewdnes I went away, wondering at the basenes of their minds, that would spende their time in such detestable sort. But no marvel, for they are geuen up into a reprobate sence, and are in religion meere atheists, as they are in trade flat dissemblers, if I should spend many sheetes in deciphering their wits, it were fruitelous, in that they be many and full of variety, for every day they inuent new tricks, and such quaint deuises as are secrete, yet passing dangerous, that if a man had Argus eyes, hee could scarce pry into the bottom of their practises. Thus for the benefit of my countrie I haue briefly discovered the law of conycatching, desiring all Iustices, if any such coseners light in your precinct, euen to vse *summum ius* against them, because it is the basest of all villanies. And that London prentices, if they chace in such conycatchers company, may teach them London lawe, that is, to defend the poore men that are wronged, and learn the caterpillers the high way to newgate, where if *Hind* fauor the with the heauiest stones in the house, and geue them his vnkindest entertainment, no doubt his other petty sinnes shall bee halfe pardoned for his labo: but I would it might be their fortune to happen into Nobles northward in white chappel, there in faith round *Robin* his dep. would make them, like wretches, feeble the weight of his heauy fetters. And so desiring both honorable and worshipful, as wel Iustices as other officers, and all states, from the Prince to the begger, to rest professed enemies to these base-minded conny-catchers, I take my leaue.

Nascimur pro patria.

A Table of the words of Art vsed in effecting these base villanies.

Wherein is discovered the nature of euery tearme, being proper to name, but to the Professors thereof.

1 High law	robbing by the highway side.	These
2 Backing law	lecherie.	
3 Cheting law	play at false dice.	
3 Crof-biting law	cosenage by whores.	
4 Conycatching law	cosenage by cards.	
5 Wersing law	cosenage by false gold.	
6 Figgings law	cutting of purses & picking of pockets.	
8 Barnards law	a drunken cosenage by cards.	

The Art of Conny-catching.

**These are the eight lawes of villanie, leading the
high waie to infamie:**

In high Lawe The Thiefe is called a high lawier,
He that setteth the Watch, a Scripper
He that standerh to watch, an Oake
He that is robb the Martin
When he yeriderh, stouping

In sucking Lawe The Bawd if it be a woman, a Pandar
The Bawd, if a man, an Apple squire
The whoore, a Commoditie
The whoors house, a Trugging place

In cheating lawe Pardon me Gentlemen, for although no man could better
then my selfe discover this lawe and his traines. and the
name of their Cheats, Far Dice, Flats, Fozgers, Langretts,
Gourds, Demies, and many other, with their nature. & the
crosses and contraries to them upon advantage, yet for some
speciall reasons, herein I will be silent.

In Crof-biting lawe The whoore, the Traffique
The man that is brought in, the Simpler
The villaines that take them, the Crof-biters

**In Coni-catch-
ing lawe** The partie that taketh up the Connie, the Setter
He that playeth the game, the Clerke
He that is cooined the Connie
He that comes in to them, the Barnackle
The monie that is wonne, Burchale

In Cucking lawe He that bringeth him in, the Clerke
The poore Connerie man, the Cooine
And the dyonkard that comes in, the Suffer

In figging lawe The Cutpurse, a Rip
He that is halfe with him, the Snap
The kniffe, the Cuttle boung
The picke pocket, a Foist
He that faceth the man, the Stale
Taking the purse, Drawing
Lying of him, Smoaking
The purse, the Bong
The monie, the Shels
The Act doing, striking

In Barnards lawe He that fercheth the man the Takes
He that is taken, the Cooine
The lauded man the Clerke
The drunken man the Barnard
And he that makes the fray, the Ru tter:

Cum multis aliis quae nunc prescribere longum est.

The Art of Cross-biting.

These quaint termes do these base arts vnto shadowe their villanie withall: for, *multa latent que non patent*, obscuring their filthie crafts with these faire colours, that the ignorant may not espie what their subtiltie is: but their end wil be like their beginning, hatcht with Cain, and consumed with Jadas: and so bidding them adue to the deuil, and you farewell to God, I end. And now to the art of Cros-biting.

The art of Cros-biting.

The Cros-biting law is a publique profession of shameles cosenage, mixt with incestuous h'oredomes, as it was practised in Gomorha or Sodom, though not after the same vnnatural manner: for the method of their mischieuous art (with blushing cheekes & trembling hart let it be spoken) is, that these villanous vipers, vnworthy the name of men, base roagues (yet why doe I tearme them so well) being outcasts from God, vipers of the world, and an excremental reversion of sin, doth consent, nay constrayne their wiues to yeeld the vse of their bodies to other men, that taking them together, he may cros-bite the party of all the crownes he can presently make, and that the world may see their monstrous practises, I wil briefly set down the maner.

They haue sundry praies that they cal simplers, which are men fondly and wantonly geuen, whom for a penaltie of their lust, they fleece of al that euer they haue: some marchants, prentices, seruingmen, gentlemen, yeomen, farmers, and all degrees, and this is their soyme: there are resident in London & the suburbes, certain men attired like Gentlemen, b'ane fellowes, but basely minded, who liuing in want, as their last refuge, fall vnto this cros-biting law and to maintein themselves, either marry with some stale whoze, or els forsooth keep one as their fréd: and these persons be comonly men of the eight lawes before rehearsed: either high Lawiers, Clerkers, Japs, Cong-catchers, or
such

6

The Art of Crof-biting.

Such of the like fraternitie. These when their other trades fail, as the Cheater, when he hath no cosin to grime with his stop dice, or a high lawier, when he hath no set match to ride about, and the Pip when there is no tearme, faire, nor time of great assemblie, then to maintaine the maine chance, they vse the benefite of their wiues or friends, to the crof-biting of such as lust after their filthy enornities: some simple men are drawen on by subtil meanes, which neuer intended such a bad matter. In summer euenings, and in the winter nightes, these traffikes, these common trulls I meane, walke abroad either in the fields or streets that are commonly haunted, as stales to drawe men into hell, and a farre of, as attending applesquires, certaine crof-biters stand aloofe, as if they knew them not: now so many men so many afflictions. Some vnruly mates that place their content in lust, letting slippe the libertie of their eies on their painted faces, fixe vpon their vnchast beauties, till their hearts be set on fire: then come they to these minions, and court them with many sweet words: alas their loues needs no long sutes, for they are forthwith entertained, and either they go to the Tauerne to seale vp the match with a pottle of Ipcocras, or straight she carries him to some bad place, and there picks his pocket, or else the Crof-biters comes swearing in, & so out-face the dismaied companion, that rather then hee would be brought in question, he would disburse all that he hath present. But this is but an easie cosnage. Some other meeting with one of that profession in the street, will question if she will drinke with him a pint of wine, they trade is neuer to refuse, and if for manners they doe, it is but once: & then scarce shall they be warme in the roome, but in comes a terrible fellow, with a side haire & a scarce full beard, as though he were one of Polyphemus cut, & he comes frowning in & saith, what hast thou to doe base knaue, to carrie my sister or my wife to the tauerne: by his owne you whoze, tis some of your companions, I wil haue

The Art of Cros-biting.

you both before the Justice, Deputie, or Constable, to be examined. The poore servingman, apprentise, farmer, or whatsoeuer he is, seeing such a terrible huffe snuffe, swearing with his dagger in his hand, is fearefull both of him and to be brought in trouble, and therfore speakes kindly and courtously vnto him, and desires him to be content he meant no harm. The whoze, that hath teares at command, fals a weeping, and cries him mercy. At this submission of them both he triumphs like a bragard, and will take no compassion: yet at last, through intreaty of other his companions coming in as strangers, hee is pacified with some forty shillings, and the poore man goes sorrowful away, sighing out that which Salomon hath in his proverbs, *A shameles woman hath hony in her lippes, and her throte as sweet as hony, her throte as soft as oyle: but the end of her is more bitter then Aloes, and her tongue is more sharp then a two edged sword, her feet go vnto death, and her steppes leade vnto hell.*

Again these truls when they haue got in a nonce, then straight they pick his purse, and then haue they their cros-biters redy, to whom they conuey the mony and so offer themselves to be searcht: but the poore man is so outfaced by these cros-biting Ruffians, that hee is glad to goe away content with his losse, yet are these easie practises. At night the Iustices send out spials in the night, they shold see how these street walkers wil let in rich garded gowns, quaint periwigs, ruffs of the largest size, quarter and halfe dapp, gloried richly with blew starch, their cheekes died with surfuling water, thus are they trickt vp, and either walke like scales vp and down the streets, or stande like the devils *Sigurs* at a fauern or alehouse, as if who shoulde say, if any be so minded to satisfie his filthie lust, to lende me his purse, and the devil his soule, let him come in and be welcome. Now sir comes by a countrey farmer, walking from his inne to performe some busines, and seeing such a gorgeous damzell, hee wondring at such a braue trench

lands

The Art of Cross-biting.

Stand staring her on the face, or perhappes doth but cast a glance, and bid her good speed, as plain simple swains haue their lustie humors as well as others: the trull straight beginning her *exordium* with a smile, saith: how now my friend, what want you, would you speake with anie body here? If the fellow haue anie bolde spirit, perhaps he will offer the wine, & then he is caught, tis inough: in he goes, and they are chamberd: then sends she for her husband, or hir friend, and there either the farmers pocket is stript, or else the cross-biters fall vpon him, and threaten him with bzielwill and the law: then for feare he giues them all in his purse, and makes them some bill to paie a summe of monie at a certaine daie. If the pooze farmer bee baile-fall, and passeth by one of these shamelesse strumpets, then will she verse it with him, and claime acquaintaunce of him, and by some policie or other fall aboord on him, and carrie him into some house or other: if he but enter in at the doores with her (though the pooze farmer neuer kiss her) yet then the cross-biters, like vultures, will prey vpon his purse, and rob him of euerie pennie. If there bee anie yong gentleman that is a nouice and hath not seene theyr fraines, to him will some common filth (that neuer knew loue) faigne an ardent and honest affection, till she and her cross-biters haue verst him to the beggers estate. Ah gentlemen, marchants, yeomen and farmers, let this te you all, and to euery degree else, be a caueat to warn you from lust, that your inordinate desire be not a meane to impoverish your purses, discredit your good names, condemne your soules, but also that your wealth got with the sweat of your browes, or left by your parents as a patrimonie, shall be a piate to those cooing cross-biters. Some fond men are so farre in with these detestable trugs, that they consume what they haue vpon them, and find nothing but a Neapolitan fauor for their labor. Reade the seventh of Salomons proverbs, and there at large view the description of a shameles and impudent curtizan: yet is there an
other

The Art of Crosse-biting.

another kind of cros-biting which is most pestilent, and that is this. There liues about this towe certeine housholders, yet more shifters and cosners; who learning some insight in the ciuill law, walke abroad like paratores, sumners and informers, heeing none at all either in office or credit, and they go spying about where any marchant, or marchants prentise, citizen, wealtie farmer, or other of credit, either accompany with anie woman familiarly, or else hath gotten some maide with child, as mens natures be prone to sin, straight they come ouer his fallows thus: they send for him to a tauerne, & ther open the matter vnto him, which they haue cunningly larned out, telling him he must be presented to the Arches, & the scitation shalbe peremptorily serued in his parish church. The partie afraid to haue his credit crackt with the wo2shipfull of the Citie, and the rest of his neighbors, & griening highly his wife should heare of it, straight takes composition with this cosner for some twentie markes, nay I heard of forty pouno cros-bitten at one time, & the the cosning informer or cros-biter promisetb to wipe him out of the booke, & discharge him from the matter, when it was neither known nor presented: so go they to the woman, and fetch her off if she be married, and though they haue this grosse sum, yet oft times they cros-bite hir for more: nay thus so they feare citizens, prentises & farmers, that they find but any waie suspicious of the like fault. The cros-biting bands, for no better can I tearme them, in that for lucre they conceale the sin, and smother vp lust, do not onely enrich themselves mightily thereby, but also discredit, hinder, and preiudice the court of the Arches, and the Officers belonging to the same. There are some poore blinde patches of that facultie, that haue their Tenements purchased, and their plate in the booke verie solemnly, who onely get their gaines by cros-biting, as is afore rehearsed. But leauing them to the deepe insight of such as be appointed with iustice to correct vice, againe to the cue of my former

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The Art of Crof-biting.

mer Crof-biters, whose fee simple to liue vpon, is nothing but the following of common, dishonest and idle truls and thereby maintaine themselues bzane, and the Drumpets in handsome furniture. And to end this ad with an Englishe demonstration, ile tell you a pzetyp tale of late perfozmed in bishopsgatestreet: there was there fine trafficques, pzettie, but common huswiues, that stood fast by a fauern doze, looking if some pray would come by for their purpose, anone the eldest of them, and most experienced in that law, named *Mal B.* spied a master of a ship comming along. Here is a simpler quoth she, Ile verse him, or hang me. Sir sayd shee, God euen, what are you so liberall as to bestow on vs thzee good wenches that are drie, a pint of wine. In faith, sayze women qd. he, I was neuer nygard for so much, and with that he takes one of them by the hande, and caries them all into the fauern, there he bestowed cheare and ipocras vpon them, drinkeing hard til the shot came to a noble, so that they thzee carousing to the Gentleman, made him somewhat tipsie, and then *Et venus in vinis, ignis in igne fuit.* Wel, night grewe on and hee woulde away, but this mistresse *Mal B.* stopt his iozney thus: gentleman qd. shee, this vnderferved fauor of yours makes vs so deeply beholding to you, that our abilitie is not able any way to make sufficient satisfaction, yet to shew vs kinde in what we can, you shall not deny me this request, to see my simple house befoze you goe. The gentleman a little whitled, consented and went with them, so the shot was payd, and away they goe: without the fauern doze stood two of their husbandes, *I. B.* and *I. R.* and they were made priuie to the practise. Home goes the Gentleman with these iolly huswiues stumbling, and at last hee was welcome to *M. mals* house, and one of the thzee went into a chamber, and got to bed, whose name was *A. B.* after they had chatted awhile, the Gentleman would haue beene gone, but shee tolde him that befoze he went hee shoulde see all the roomes of her house, and so ledde him vp into the chamber where the party lay in bed. Who is here sayd the

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The Art of Crof-biting.

gentleman: marry sayth mal a good pretty wench sir, and if you be not wel lie downe by her, you can take no harm of her: Dronkennes desires luste, and so the Gentleman begins to dally, and away goes she with the candle, and at last he put off his clothes and went to bed: yet hee was not so dronke but hee could after a while remember his money, and feeling for his Purse all was gone, and three lynkes of his whistle broken off: the sum that was in his purse was in golde and silver twenty nobles. And thus he was in a maze though his head were all laden, in comes J. B. the good man of the house, and two other with him, and he speaking somewhat loude, Peace Husband quoth shee, there is one in bed, speake not so loud. In bed, saith he, gogs nownes, ile goe see, and so wil J. saith the other: you shal not sayth bys wife, & stroue agaynst him, but bp he goes, he and his crof-biters with him, and seeing the gentleman in bed, out with his dagger, and asked what base villen it was that there sought to dishonest his wife: wel, hee sent one of them for a Constable, and made the gentleman rise, who halfe drunk had that remembrance to giue faire words, and to intreate him to saue his credit: but no intreatie could serue, but to the Counter he must, and the Constable must be sent for: yet at last one of them intreated that the gentleman might be honestly vled, and caried to a tauerne to talk of the matter til a Constable came. But saith J. B. ile haue the law vpon him. But the base crof-biter at last stoupt, and to the Tauerne they went, where the gentleman did laye bys whistle to payne for money, and there bestowed as much of them as came to ten shillings, and sate drinking, and chatting, vntil the next morrow. By that the Gentleman had solne a nap, it waxed day light, and then seeing himselfe compassed with these cursed Crof-biters, and remembering his nights vlsage, soberly simpling, demanded of them if they could tel who he was, the answered no: why then, quoth he, you base colening Rogues you shal before we depart: and with that drawing his sword, stayed them in the chamber, desiring that the Constable might be sent for: but
this

The Art of Cros-biting.

this bzaue of his could not dismay M. Mall, for shee had
biddden a sharper bzunt befoze, witnes the time of her
martirdome, when vpon her shoulders was engrauen the
hiktozy of her whorish qualities: but she replying, swoze,
sith he was so lusty, her husband should not put it vp by no
meanes. I will tel thee thou base cros-biting baud, quoth
he, and you coosening companions, I serue a noble man, &
for my credit with him, I refer me to the penaltie hee will
impose on you, for by God I wil make you an example to
all cros-biters ere I ends with you, I tel you villaines, I
serue, and with that he namte his Lord. When the guilty
whozes and coseners heard of his credite and seruice, they
began humbly to intreat him to be good to the: then quoth
he, first deliuer me my mony, they vpon that gladly gaue
him all, and restozed the linkes of his chaine. When hee
had all, he smiled, and sware afresh that he would torment
them for al this, that the seueritie of their punishment
might be a caueat to others to beware of the like coose-
nage: and vpon that knockt with his foote, and sayde hee
would not let them go til he had a constable. When in ge-
neral they humbled themselves, so recompencing the par-
tie, that he agreed to passe ouer the matter, conditionallie
beside, that they would pay the sixtene shillings hee had
spent in charges, which they also perfozmed. The Gentle-
man stept his way, and said, you may see the olde prouerbe
fulfilled, *Fallere fallentem non est fraus*. Thus haue I de-
ciphered an odious practise not woorthy to be named: and
now wishing al, of what estate soeuer, to beware of filthy
lust, and such damnable stales as drawes men on to inor-
dinate desires, and rather to spend their coine amongst
honest companie, then to bequeath it to such base cros-bi-
ters, as praie vpon men, like rauens vpon dead carcases,
I end with this praier, that Cros-biting and Conny-cat-
ching may be as little knowen in England, as the eating
of swines flesh was amongst the Iewes. Farewel.

Nascimur pro patria.

FINIS.

A PLEASANT DISCOVERIE of the cofenage of Colliars.

Although (courtious Readers) I did not put in amongst the Lawes of cofening, the Law of Legering, which is a deceit that Colliars abuse the Commonwealth withall, in hauing vnlawfull sacks, yet take it for a petty kind of craft or mysterie, as preiudiciall to the poore as any of the other two: for I omitted diuers other diuellsish vices: as, the nature of the Lift, the black arte, and the Curbing Law, which is the filchers and theeuers that come into houses or shops, and lift away any thing: or picklocks, or hookers at windowes, although they be as species and branches to the table before rehearsed. But omitting them, againe to our Law of Legering. Know therefore that there be inhabiting in and about London, certaine caterpillers (Colliers I should say) that terme themselves (amongest themselves) by the name of Legers, who for that the honourable, the L. Mayor of the city of London, and his officers, looke straitly to the measuring of coles, doe (to prevent the execution of his iustice) plant themselves in and about the Suburbs of London, as Shordich, White chappel, Southwarke, and such places, and there they haue a house or yarde that hath a back gate, because it is the more conuenient for their cofening purpose, and the reason is this: the Leger, the craftie Collier I mean, riseth very early in the morning, and either goeth towards Croyden, Whestone, Greenwich or Romford, and there meeteth with Country colliers, who bring coles to serue the market: there in a forestalling manner, this Leger bargaineth with the country colliar for his coles, and payeth for them nineteen or twenty shillings at the most, but commonly fifteen or sixteen, and there is in the lode 36 sacks: so that they pay for euery couple about fourteen pence. Now hauing bought these, euery sack conteyning full four busbels, he carryeth the countrey colliar home to his legering place, and there at the back gate causeth him to vnload, and, as they say, shoot the coles down. As soone as the country colliar hath dispatched and is gone, the leger (who hath three or foure hired men vnder him) bringeth forth his owne sacks, which are long and narrow, holding at the most not three busbels so that in the change of euery sack they gaine a busbel. Tush yet this were somewhat tollerable, although the gaine and surie is monstrous, but this sufficeth not, for they fill not these sacks full by farre, but put into them some two busbels and a halfe, Lying in the mouth of the sack certaine choise coles, which they call fillers, to make the sack shew faire though the rest be all small willow cole, and halfe drosse. When they haue not thus halfe filled their sacks, but thrust coles into them, that which they Lay vppermost is best filled, to make the greater shew: then a tall sturdy knaue that is all ragd, and darty on his legs as though he came out of the countrey (for they darty their hose and shoes upon purpose to make themselves seem countrey colliars.) Thus with two sacks apeece they cyther go out at the back gate, or scalle out at the sextet side, and so go vp and down the Suburbs, and sell their coles in summer for fourteen and sixteen pence the couple, and in winter for eighteen or twenty. The poore Cookes and other Citizens that buy them, thinke they be countrey Colliers that haue left some coales of their load, and would gladly haue more, supposing (as the Statute is) they be good and lawfull sacks: are thus cofened by the Legers, and haue but two busbels and a halfe for foure busbels, and yet extremely wacke in the price, which is not onely a great hinderaunce to her Maiesties poore Citizens,

A discouery of the cosenage of Colliers,

Commons, but greatly preiudicial to the master colliers, that bring sacks and measure out of the country. Then consider (gentle Readers) what a kinde of cosenage these legers vse, that can make of thirty sacks, some fifty sixe, which I haue seene with mine eyes; for I haue set down with my pen how many turnes they haue made of a load, and they made twenty eyght turnes, euery turne being two sacks: so that they haue gotten an intollerable gaine by their false measure. I could not be silent seeing this abuse, but thought to reueale it for my countries commoditie, and to geue light to the worshipfull Iustices, and other her Majesties Officers in Middlesex, Surrey, and elf-where, to looke to such a grosse cosenage as contrary to a direct statute dooth defraud and impouerish her Majesties poore commons. Wel may the Honorable and Worshipful of London flourish, who carefully looke to the Country coles, and if they find not foure Busbels in euery sack, sel them to the poore as for fet, and distribute the mony to such as haue need, burning the sacks, and honouring or rather dishonouring the pillery with the Colliers dirty faces. And wel may the Honourable and Worshipful of the Suburbs liue and prosper if they looke in iustice to these Legers, who deserue more punishment then the Statute appoynts them, which is whipping at a carts taylor, or with fauer the pillerie. For fewel or fiering, being a thing necessary in a Common-wealth, and Charcole vsed more then any other, the poore not able to buy by the load, are fayne to get in their fire by the sack, and so are greatly cosened by the retaylor.

Seeing therefore the careful Lawes her Maiestie hath appoynted for wealsh of her Commons, and succour of the poore, I would humbly intreate all her Majesties Officers to looke into the life of these legers, and root them out, that the poore feel not the burthen of their vnconscionable gaynes. I heard with mine eares a poore woman of Shordich who had bought coles of a Leger, with weeping teares complaine and ryle against him in the streete, in her rough eloquence calling him a cosening knaue, saying, Tis no maruel vilen (quoth she) if men compare you colliers to the deuil, seeing your consciences are worsen then the deuils: for he takes none but those soules whom God hates, and you vndo the poore whom God looeth loue.

Wh: is the matter good wife (quoth I) that you vse such inuective worder against the Collier. A collier sir (quoth she) he is a theefe, and a robber of the common people. He tel you sir, I bought of a Country collier two sacks for thirtene pence, and I bought of this knaue three sacks, which cost me 22. pence: & sir, when I measured both their sacks, I had more in the two sacks by 3 pecks, then I had in the three. I would (quoth she) my neighbours would toyne with me in a supplication, and by God I would kneele before the Queene, and intreat that such cosening Colliers might not onely be punished with the bare pillery (for they haue such black faces that no man knowes them agayne, and so are they carelesse) but that they might leaue their eares behind them for a forfeit: and if that would not mend them, that Bull with a fayre halter might root them out of the world, that liue in the world by such grosse and dishonest cosenage. The Collier hearing this, went smiling away, because he knew his life was not lookt into, and she woman wept for anger that she had not some one by that might with iustice reuenge her quarrell.

There be also certaine Colliers that bring coles to London in Barges, & they be called Grippers, so these comes the Leger, and bargains with him for his coles, and

A discouery of the cosenage of Colliers.

sels by retale with the like cosenage of sacks as I rehearsed before. But those mal-
leagers (not content with this monstrous game) do besides mix among their other
sacks of coles, store of sbruffe dust and small cole to their great aduantage. And for
prooffe hercof, I will recite you a matter of truth, lately persourmed by a Cookes
wife vpon a cosening Collier.

How a Cookes wife in Lhndon did lately serue
a Collier for his cosenage.

IT chanced this summer that a load of coles came foorth of
Kent to Billingsgate, and a leger bought them, who thinking
to deceiue the citizens, as he did those in the Suburbs, furni-
shed himselfe with a couple of sacks, and comes vp S. Mary hil to
sell them. A Cookes wife bargaynd with the Collier for his coles,
and they agreed vpon fourteen pence for the couple: which done,
he carried in the coles and shot them; And when the wife sawe
them, and perceyuing there was scarce fve bushels for eyght, shee
calls a little girle to her, and bade her go for the Constable: for
thou cosening rogue, quoth she, (speaking to the Collier) I will
teach thee how thou shalt cosen me with thy false sackes, howsoe-
uer thou dost others, & I will haue thee before my L. Mayor,
with that she caught a spit in her hand, and swore if he offred to
stirre, she would therewith broach him. At which word the col-
lier was amazed, & the feare of the Pillery put him in such a
fright, that he sayd he would go to his bote, and retorne againe to
answere whatsoener she durst obiect against him, & for pledge
thereof (quoth the Collier) keepe my sackes, your money, and the
coles also. Whereupon the woman let him goe: but as soone as
the Collier was out of dores, it was needelesse to byd him runne,
for downe he gets to his Bote and away he thrustes from Billins-
gate, and so immediately went downe to Wapping, and neuer af-
ter durst retorne to the Cookes wife, to demaund eyther money,
sacks, or coales.

How a flax-wife in London serued a cosening Collier.

How

A Discouery of the cosfnage of Colliers.

NOW Gentlemen by your leaue, and heare a merry iest. There was in the Suburbs of London a Flax-wife that wanted coles, and seeing a *Leger* come by with a couple of sacks, that had before deceiued her in like sort, cheped, bargained and bought them, and so went in with her to shoote them in her Colehouse. As soone as she saw her coles, she easily ghesled there was scarce fixe bushels, yet dissembling the matter, she payd him for them and bad him bring her two sacks more. The Collier went his way, and in the meane time the Flax-wife measured the coles, and there was iust fiue bushels & a peck. Hereupon she cald in her neighbors, being a company of women that before time had also been pinchd in their coles, and shewed them the cosfnage, and desired their aide to her in tormenting the Collier, which they promist to performe: and thus it fell out. She conueyed them into a backe roome (some sixteen of them) euerie one hauing a good cudgell vnder her apron, straight comes the Collier and saith, Mistres here be your coles: welcome good Collier (quoth shee) I praie thee follow me into the backe side, & shoot them in another roome. The Collier was content and went with her, but as soone as he was in, the good wife lockt the doore, and the Collier seeing such a group of wiues in the roome, was amazed, yet sayd, God speed you all shrewes: welcome (quoth one iolly Dame) being appointed by them all to giue sentence against him: who so soone as the Collier had shut his sackes, sayd: sitte Collier, knowe that we are heere all assembled as a grand Iurie, to determine of thy villanies, for selling vs false sacks of coles, and know that thou art here indited vpon cosfnage, therefore hold vp thy hand at the barre, and either saie guiltie or not guiltie, and by whom thou wilt be tried, for thou must receiue condigne punishment for the same ere thou depart. The Collier who thought they had but iested, smiled and said, Come on, which of you shall be my iudge. Maie sir, quoth one iolly dame, that is I, and by G o d you knaue, you shall finde I will pronounee sentence against you seuerely, if you bee found guiltie. When the Collier sawe they were in earnest, he sayd, Come, come, open the doore and let me go. With that fiue or sixe wiues started vp and fell vpon the Collier, and gaue him a score of sound lambeakes with their cudgels, and bad him speake more reuerently to their principall. The Collier feeling it smart, was afraid, and thought mirth and curtesie would be the best meane to make amends for his villanie, and therefore sayd he would bee tried by the verdict of the smocke. Vpon this they paneld a Iurie, and the flax-wife gaue euidence; and because this vnaccustomed Iurie required witnes, she measured the coales before the Colliers face, vpon which he was found guiltie, and she that sate as principall to giue iudgement vpon him, began as followeth.

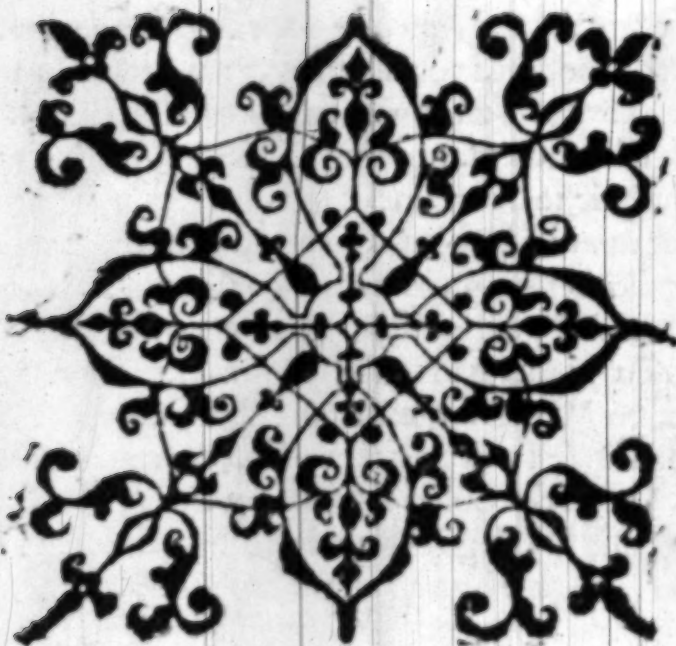
Collier, thou art condemned heere by prooffe of flat cosfnage, and I am now appointed in Conscience to giue sentence against thee, beeing not onely mouued thereunto because of this poore woman, but also for the generall commoditie of my Countrie, and therefore this is my sentence: We haue no pillorie for thee, nor cart to whip thee at, but here I doe award that thou shalt haue as many bastinadoes as thy bones will beare, and then to be turned out of doores without sackes or monie. This sentence being pronounced, she rose vp, & gaue no respite of time for the execution, but according to the sentence before expressed, all the women fell vpon him, beating him extreemly, among whom he lent some lustie buffets, but might ouercomes right, and therefore *Ne Hercules contra duos*. The women so crusht him, that he was not able to lift his handes to his head, and so with a broken

A discoverie of the Cooftraige of Colliers.

broken pate or two he was paid, and like lacke drum, faue & orderly turned out of doores.

This was the reward that the Collier had, and I praie God all such Colliers may be so serued, and that good wiues when they buy such sacks, may giue them such payments, and that the Honorable and Worshipfull of this land, may looke into this grosse abuse of Colliers, as well for charitie sake, as also for the benefite of the poore. And so wishing Colliers to amend their deceitfull and disorderd dealings herein, I end.

F I N I S.



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